CLAIMS

1 – 130 (canceled)

131. (currently amended) A method for managing content in a shared use operating environment, the shared use operating environment including a registration server, a content server connectable by a network link to the registration server, and a client workstation connectable by a client-server network communications link to the content server, the method comprising the steps of:

    registering a user at the registration server, thereby characterizing the user as a registered user;

    receiving at the content server a request by the registered user for access to content which contains at least one previously treated critical portion;

    authenticating the request;

    serving at least the critical portion over the client-server network communications link for presentation to the registered user at the client workstation; and

    ~~disabling caching and other disk writes to~~ prevent<u>ing</u> a copy of the critical portion of the content from being created on nonvolatile storage at the client workstation <u>at least in part by disabling caching and other disk writes</u>.

132. (currently amended) A method for managing content in an operating environment that includes peer-to-peer nodes, the method comprising the steps of:

    registering users;

    checking user passwords to prevent unregistered users from receiving content services;

    receiving at a first peer node a request by a registered user for access to content which contains at least one previously treated critical portion; ~~and~~

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serving at least the critical portion over a network communications link to a second peer node for presentation to the registered user; and

preventing a copy of the critical portion of the content from being created on nonvolatile storage at the second peer node, at least in part by disabling caching and other disk writes.

133. (new) The method of claim 132, wherein the serving step serves digital content that contains at least one musical recording.

134. (new) The method of claim 132, wherein the serving step serves digital content that contains visual images.

135. (new) The method of claim 132, wherein the serving step serves video content.

136. (new) The method of claim 132, wherein the method delivers content by synchronous sharing.

137. (new) The method of claim 136, wherein the method comprises video conferencing.

138. (new) The method of claim 132, wherein the method delivers content in a real-time manner.

139. (new) The method of claim 132, wherein the method delivers content in an interactive manner.

140. (new) The method of claim 132, wherein the critical portion comprises encrypted content.

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141. (new) The method of claim 132, wherein the critical portion comprises compressed content.

142. (new) The method of claim 132, wherein the critical portion comprises licensed content.

143. (new) The method of claim 132, wherein the critical portion comprises content that is compressed and encrypted.

144. (new) The method of claim 132, further comprising the step of disabling use of at least a portion of the content after an expected periodic security handshake is not received.

145. (new) The method of claim 132, further comprising the step of downloading at least a non-critical portion of the content to the second peer node at least one hour before the serving step serves the critical portion.

146. (new) The method of claim 132, wherein the method moves content between peer nodes in response to anticipated requests from users.

147. (new) The method of claim 132, wherein the method moves content between peer nodes in response to actual requests from users.

148. (new) The method of claim 132, wherein the method operates in conjunction with a license enforcement software program executing on the second peer node.

149. (new) The method of claim 132, wherein the method tracks content use in order to create records on which invoices are at least partially based.

150. (new) The method of claim 132, wherein the method tracks content location and determines whether content is already resident on the second peer node or near the second peer node.

151. (new) The method of claim 132, wherein only authenticated network users are able to access the content.

152. (new) The method of claim 131, further comprising reserving a particular piece of courseware content for a particular registered user.

153. (new) The method of claim 131, further comprising monitoring the client-server network communications link so that the user pays only for actual use of the content.

154. (new) The method of claim 131, further comprising downloading at least one non-critical portion of the content to the client workstation at least two hours before serving the critical portion.

155. (new) The method of claim 131, further comprising presenting the registered user with an invoice for usage of the content.